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Superintendent

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ARIZONA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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STATE BOARD APPROVES HORNE'S PROPOSAL FOR CUTTING STANDARDIZED TESTING TIME IN HALF

CHOICES AHEAD FOR IMPLEMENTATION DATE

PHOENIX (November 17, 2003) – The Arizona State Board of Education today gave the green light to Superintendent of Public Instruction Tom Horne's plan to reduce by half the amount of classroom time devoted to standardized testing. The "embedded AIMS" test will combine elements of the national Stanford 9 exam with Arizona's AIMS test, meaning students will only face one standardized exam per year instead of two.

The Board will make a decision on when to implement the new test at an upcoming meeting.

"This is a victory for Arizona's public school students," Horne said. "When this new test takes effect, there will be more time devoted to classroom instruction. When combined with student accountability, school accountability, and an intensive school improvement process, we expect to be able to help students learn substantially more, and demonstrate this with higher test scores."

"Arizona will lose none of the benefits of comparing students to their peers throughout the country, but more emphasis will be placed on Arizona's content standards, which are highly regarded nationally. This will also increase the opportunity for students to learn the content for which they're being held responsible in order to graduate from high school."

The Department of Education will now ask testing companies to write an exam that, pending Board approval, can either be fully implemented in the 2004-05 school year, or be partially field tested that year with full implementation in 2005-06, depending on which timeline the Board deems appropriate.

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